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ABSTRACT

This book explores postmodern critique in scholarly inquiry in the context of the philosophies of Jean-Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Richard Rorty, and Calvin Schrag. Claiming that the overall course of inquiry is characterized by basic theoretical deficiencies, postmodern critique suggests a rethinking of the nature and aims of inquiry; it is especially concerned with the importance of going beyond the idea that reality is that which is composed of things to know, and it suggests that the disciplines pose an unduly constraining condition on intellectual capacity. In the first chapter, basic issues of postmodern critique are raised. Chapter 2 examines how four established thinkers (Robert Maynard Hutchins, Alfred North Whitehead, A. Bartlett Giamatti, and Jaroslav Pelikan) ground their ideas on scholarly inquiry on aims rooted in the past. Chapters 3 and 4 analyze postmodern critique as articulated by Lyotard, Rorty, Schrag, Foucault, and Derrida, noting how each philosopher emphasizes intellectual activity and experience over the discovery and production of knowledge. Chapter 5 argues that the disciplines are the foundation of the view of inquiry as investigating a preexistent reality. Chapter 6 offers an alternative foundation in which inquiry is inquirer-centered rather than object- or knowledge-centered, resulting in "intellectually compelling ideas" and "postdisciplinary" forms of knowledge. (Contains approximately 135 references.) (DB)



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